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	DS-00	EB-00	EUR-00	VC-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00
	IO-00	LAB-01	L-00	VCE-00	AC-01	NSAE-00	OIC-02
	OMB-01	OPIC-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00
	SP-00	SSO-00	STR-00	TRSE-00	USIE-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00
	PRM-01	DRL-02	G-00	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/010W	

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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7133
INFO NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 HARARE 005270

SIPDIS

NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR GAYLE SMITH
LONDON FOR CHARLES GURNEY
PARIS FOR BISA WILLIAMS
PASS USTR FOR ROSA WHITAKER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/15/10
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [ZI](#) [ZANU](#) [PF](#)
SUBJECT: GOVERNMENT RESORTS TO HAM-FISTED INTIMIDATION
CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE PARLIAMENTARY OPPOSITION

REF: A) HARARE 5214 B) HARARE 5187
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CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR MCDONALD. REASONS: 1.5 (B) AND
(D).

SUMMARY

1. (C) IN THEIR TWO-DAY RAID ON MDC OFFICES, POLICE AND CIO AGENTS SEIZED PAPER FILES AND DISKETTES, AND DOWNLOADED COMPUTER FILES. SEIZED DOCUMENTS INCLUDED THE MDC'S MEMBERSHIP LISTS, FUNDING SOURCES, STRATEGIES FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY LEGAL CHALLENGES AND THE 2002 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION, AND EVIDENCE GATHERED ON THE MURDERS AND OTHER VIOLENCE COMMITTED DURING THE PRE-ELECTION CAMPAIGN. ALL THE SEIZED INFORMATION WAS RETURNED ON SEPTEMBER 16 ON THE INSTRUCTION OF A HIGH COURT ORDER. MDC MP TENDAI BITI SPECULATED THAT THE SERVING OF LEGAL PAPERS ON PRESIDENT MUGABE IN NEW YORK HAD EMBARRASSED HIM AND LED HIM TO RETALIATE. HOME AFFAIRS MINISTER JOHN NKOMO IS EXPECTED TO SPEAK TO PARLIAMENT ABOUT THE RAIDS ON SEPTEMBER 19, AND BITI HAS HEARD THAT NKOMO MAY LINK SENIOR MDC OFFICIALS TO ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING WEAPONS IMPORTATIONS.

2. (C) LAST WEEK'S RAIDS WERE THE LATEST CHAPTER IN THE GOZ'S CAMPAIGN OF INTIMIDATION AGAINST THE MDC. IT IS UNCLEAR HOW FAR THE GOVERNMENT PLANS TO GO, AND THE USG NEEDS TO BE PREPARED WITH A STRONG RESPONSE IF IT BECOMES CLEAR THAT THE GOZ IS TRYING TO ELIMINATE THE MDC AS A VIABLE OPPOSITION PARTY. NKOMO'S SEPTEMBER 19 SPEECH SHOULD PROVIDE A GUIDE TO THE GOVERNMENT'S INTENTIONS.
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END SUMMARY.

DOCUMENTS AND COMPUTER FILES SEIZED

3. (C) ACCORDING TO MDC ADVISOR CLIVE PUZEY, THE RAID ON THE OFFICES OF THE OPPOSITION MDC CONCLUDED ON FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 15. HE STATED THAT POLICE, ACCOMPANIED BY AGENTS OF THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE ORGANIZATION (CIO), SEIZED ALL OF THE MDC'S PAPER FILES AND COMPUTER DISKETTES, AND DOWNLOADED ALL OF THE PARTY'S COMPUTER FILES. INCLUDED IN THE SEIZED INFORMATION, PUZEY SAID, WERE THE PARTY'S MEMBERSHIP LISTS, FINANCIAL RECORDS, STRATEGIES FOR THE 2002 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND FOR THEIR LEGAL CHALLENGES RELATED TO THE JUNE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS, AND ALL THE EVIDENCE COLLECTED ON THE MURDERS AND OTHER SIGNIFICANT VIOLENCE COMMITTED DURING THE PRE-ELECTION PERIOD.

4. (C) LATE ON SEPTEMBER 15, POLOFF SPOKE WITH SEKAYI HOLLAND, THE MDC'S SECRETARY FOR INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND UNSUCCESSFUL PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATE. HOLLAND WAS PRESENT AT THE MDC'S EASTGATE OFFICE AND PROVIDED AN

ACCOUNT OF THE SECOND RAID BY POLICE AND CIO OFFICERS.
HOLLAND REPORTED THAT EARLY IN THE MORNING ON SEPTEMBER 15
THE POLICE ORDERED EVERYONE OUT OF THE BUILDING BUT, AS THE
MOST SENIOR MDC OFFICIAL PRESENT, HOLLAND REFUSED TO LEAVE.
SHE REPORTED THAT THE POLICE, ACCOMPANIED BY THE CIO,
PROCEEDED TO USE RAMMING RODS TO BREAK DOWN THE DOORS TO
SEVERAL OFFICES, INCLUDING THAT OF MDC PRESIDENT MORGAN
TSVANGIRAI. THE OFFICERS TOOK THE WHOLE DAY TO REMOVE

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VIRTUALLY ALL THE PAPER AND COMPUTER FILES. THE CIO
OFFICERS THREATENED TO TAKE HOLLAND TO THEIR HEADQUARTERS,
BUT DECIDED NOT TO UPON LEAVING AT THE END OF THE DAY.
HOLLAND WAS SHAKEN, BUT OTHERWISE UNHARMED.

15. (C) IN A MEETING ON SEPTEMBER 18 WITH THE AMBASSADOR,
DCM, AND POLOFF, MDC SECRETARY-GENERAL WELSHMAN NCUBE AND
MDC MP (AND SHADOW FOREIGN MINISTER) TENDAI BITI PROVIDED
ADDITIONAL DETAILS ON THE RAID. ACCORDING TO NCUBE, IT
WAS CLEAR THAT THE GRENADE ATTACK ON MDC HEADQUARTERS
EARLIER IN THE WEEK HAD BEEN A PRETEXT FOR THE GOVERNMENT
TO GET ITS HANDS ON LISTS OF MDC PATRONS AND STRATEGIES.
THE MDC SECRETARY-GENERAL AFFIRMED THAT, DURING THE RAID,
THE POLICE AND CIO AGENTS APPEARED TO BE MOST INTERESTED
IN THE DOCUMENTS AND COMPUTER FILES RELATING TO FINANCIAL
TRANSACTIONS AND THE MDC'S FUNDING SOURCES. THEY SEIZED,
INTER ALIA, A LETTER FROM MORGAN TSVANGIRAI TO THE
INTERNATIONAL REPUBLICAN INSTITUTE (IRI) CONCERNING IRI'S
WORKSHOPS FOR NEW MDC MPS, A LETTER THANKING A DUTCH NGO
FOR PROVIDING ASSISTANCE, AND LETTERS OF CONGRATULATIONS
TO THE MDC FROM A VARIETY OF ORGANIZATIONS SENT AFTER THE
PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS.

16. (C) NCUBE INSISTED THAT NONE OF THE SEIZED

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INFORMATION HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH "SECURITY-RELATED
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MATTERS." HE REPORTED THAT THE GOZ HAD NOT OBTAINED ALL
THE COMPUTER FILES AT THE EASTGATE OFFICE, AS THE MDC
STAFF THERE HAD MANAGED QUICKLY TO SWITCH SOME OF THEIR
COMPUTERS WITH A SYMPATHETIC ARCHITECTURAL FIRM NEXT
DOOR. THE PAPER FILES AND 21 COMPUTER DISKETTES WHICH
WERE TAKEN WERE RETURNED TO THE MDC ON SATURDAY
AFTERNOON, SEPTEMBER 16, AFTER A HIGH COURT JUDGE ORDERED
THEM TO DO SO. ACCORDING TO NCUBE, THE HIGH COURT ORDER
ALSO REQUIRED THAT THE MDC RECEIVE NOTIFICATION 48 HOURS
PRIOR TO THE ISSUANCE OF ANY ADDITIONAL WARRANTS.

WHAT SPARKED IT

17. (C) WHEN ASKED WHY THE POLICE HAD SPENT TWO DAYS
REMOVING FILES, SEKAYI HOLLAND SAID ZANU-PF WAS ALARMED
BY A RESURGENCE OF ANTI-GOVERNMENT RALLIES IN
TRADITIONALLY STRONG ZANU-PF TERRITORY IN RURAL AREAS.
IN PARTICULAR, SHE SAID 15,000 PEOPLE HAD TURNED OUT FOR
AN MDC RALLY IN MBERENGWA EAST, MIDLANDS PROVINCE, THE

PREVIOUS WEEKEND TO CELEBRATE THE "REOPENING" OF THE MBERENGWA DISTRICT TO MDC SUPPORTERS. MBERENGWA HAD BEEN DECLARED A "NO-GO" AREA BY ZANU-PF SUPPORTERS DURING THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION CAMPAIGN, AND HAD BEEN PARTICULARLY HARD-HIT BY PRE-ELECTION VIOLENCE, ACCORDING TO HOLLAND. (COMMENT: IT IS A STRETCH TO LINK THE RAID OF THE MDC OFFICES IN HARARE TO AN MDC RALLY IN MIDLANDS. HOWEVER, HOLLAND WAS CLEARLY FRIGHTENED BY ONGOING THREATS AGAINST HER LIFE FROM ZANU-PF, AND THIS MAY HAVE EXAGGERATED HER RESPONSE TO THE MDC RAIDS. END COMMENT.)

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8 (C) TENDAI BITI SURMISED THAT THE RECENT SERVING OF LEGAL PAPERS, INITIATED BY MDC MEMBERS, ON PRESIDENT MUGABE IN NEW YORK LIKELY EMBARRASSED HIM AND LED HIM TO RETALIATE. IN ADDITION, BITI CONTINUED, THE GOZ HAD SERIOUSLY UNDERESTIMATED THE MDC'S ABILITY TO PLAY AN EFFECTIVE ROLE IN PARLIAMENT. FACED WITH A SINKING ECONOMY AND REGULAR CRITICISMS FROM THE MDC, MUGABE IS INCREASINGLY DESPERATE AND ONE OF HIS FEW OPTIONS IS TO COME AFTER THE MDC WITH STRONG-ARM TACTICS. MUGABE, BITI SAID, HAS ALWAYS USED VIOLENCE AND INTIMIDATION AS AN EFFECTIVE TACTIC. NCUBE SURMISED THAT THE GOZ WAS FORCED TO ACT OVERTLY AGAINST THE MDC BECAUSE THE CIO HAD BEEN UNSUCCESSFUL AT INFILTRATING THE PARTY.

9. (C) BITI EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT THE GOZ MIGHT CLAMP DOWN ON SENIOR MDC LEADERS IN THE COMING WEEK, AS THE GOZ DID IN THE EARLY 1980'S WHEN IT PROSECUTED SENIOR ZAPU OFFICIALS ON TRUMPED-UP WEAPONS CHARGES. MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS JOHN NKOMO IS SCHEDULED TO ADDRESS PARLIAMENT ON SEPTEMBER 19 CONCERNING THE GRENADE ATTACK AND THE POLICE/CIO RAIDS, AND THE MDC HAS HEARD HE MIGHT LINK THE SENIOR-MOST MDC OFFICIALS TO ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING THE IMPORTATION OF WEAPONS. BITI INSISTED THAT SUCH CHARGES ARE LUDICROUS, AS HE DOES NOT EVEN POSSESS A GUN.

MDC'S NEXT STEPS

10. (C) NCUBE SAID THE MDC'S EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE PLANS TO MEET ON SEPTEMBER 20 TO CONSIDER NEXT STEPS. THE
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COMMITTEE WILL CONSIDER LEGAL AND POLITICAL OPTIONS, INCLUDING CHALLENGING THE GOVERNMENT'S ACTIONS IN COURT AND ORGANIZING A NATIONAL STRIKE. BITI ADDED THAT THE SUBSTANCE OF MINISTER NKOMO'S SPEECH ON SEPTEMBER 19 WOULD LIKELY DETERMINE THE MDC'S FUTURE MOVES.

COMMENT

11. (C) THE GOVERNMENT HAS HARASSED AND INTIMIDATED THE MDC AT EVERY TURN SINCE ITS FOUNDING LAST YEAR. FACED WITH THE MDC'S RISING POPULARITY IN THE AFTERMATH OF FEBRUARY'S CONSTITUTIONAL REFERENDUM DEFEAT, AND THE PROSPECT OF LOSING CONTROL OF PARLIAMENT, THE GOZ UNLEASHED A CAMPAIGN OF TERROR FOCUSED ON MDC SUPPORTERS AND CANDIDATES IN THE RUN UP TO THE JUNE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS. THE OCCUPATIONS BY SO-CALLED WAR VETERANS OF COMMERCIAL FARMS, MOST OF WHOM ARE OWNED BY MDC SUPPORTERS, WERE A KEY ELEMENT IN THE GOZ'S ELECTION STRATEGY.

12. (C) LAST WEEK'S RAID ON MDC OFFICES, AND THE GRENADE ATTACK WHICH APPARENTLY SERVED AS A PRETEXT FOR IT, WAS THE LATEST, AND PERHAPS MOST SINISTER, CHAPTER IN THIS

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INTIMIDATION CAMPAIGN. SPECULATION IS RIFE HERE ON WHAT
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MAY HAVE BEEN THE PRECIPITATING EVENT FOR THE GOVERNMENT
ACTION. THE BOTTOM LINE, THOUGH, IS THAT THE MDC IS
GAINING STRENGTH AND IS SUBJECTING THE GOZ TO CRITICISM,
CALLS FOR ACCOUNTABILITY, AND PUBLIC SCRUTINY TO WHICH IT
IS UNACCUSTOMED. THE OPPOSITION PARTY NOW POSES A VERY
REAL THREAT TO MUGABE'S HOLD ON POWER (THE MDC WILL SWEEP
MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS EXPECTED LATER THIS YEAR AND LIKELY
WOULD WIN THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IF IT WERE HELD TODAY
AND WERE HALF-WAY FAIR AND FREE), AND HE AND HIS CRONIES
WILL DO ALL THEY CAN TO MINIMIZE THAT THREAT. IN A SMALL
PRIVATE LUNCHEON ATTENDED BY FOUR GOVERNMENT MINISTERS
AND OTHER DIPLOMATS ON SEPTEMBER 15, THE AMBASSADOR ASKED
THE REASONS FOR THE GOZ ACTION AGAINST THE MDC. THE
MINISTERS WERE ALL SILENT, WITH NOT A SINGLE ONE
ATTEMPTING TO JUSTIFY THE RAID.

13. (C) IT IS APPARENT TO US NOW THAT THE GOZ (ZANU-PF)
NOT ONLY HAS NO INTENTION OF WORKING WITH THE MDC, BUT
WILL RESORT TO VIOLENCE AND INTIMIDATION TO TRY TO
RECOVER GROUND IT HAS LOST TO ITS UPSTART RIVAL. IT IS
UNCLEAR, THOUGH, HOW FAR THE GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO GO,
BUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE GOVERNMENT MAY TRY TO LINK
THE MDC LEADERSHIP TO ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES -- AND THUS
ARREST THEM -- IS EXTREMELY TROUBLING. AS BITI
MENTIONED, THE GOZ UNDERTOOK A SIMILAR APPROACH IN THE
1980'S IN ELIMINATING ZAPU AS A VIABLE OPPOSITION PARTY.
WE HAVE KNOWN THE MDC LEADERS FOR QUITE SOME TIME AND
FIND IT EXTREMELY UNLIKELY THAT ANY OF THEM WOULD BE
INVOLVED IN IMPORTING WEAPONS.

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